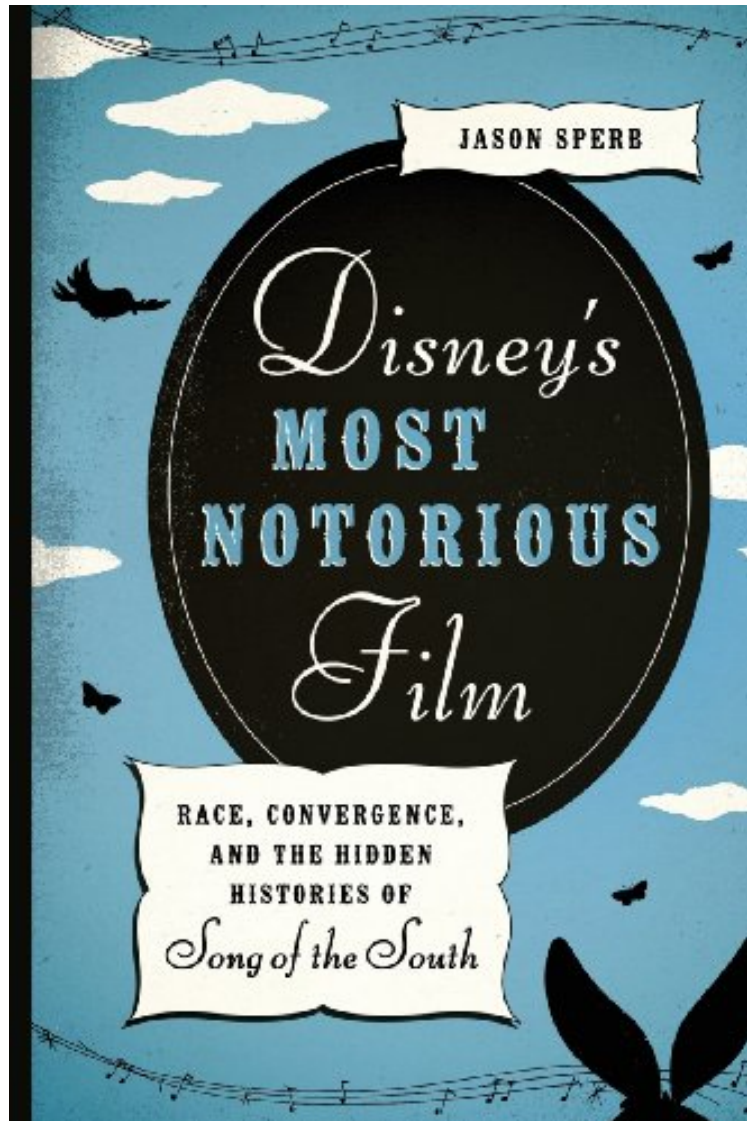


[Ebook free] Disney's Most Notorious Film: Race, Convergence, and the Hidden Histories of Song of the South

Disney's Most Notorious Film: Race, Convergence, and the Hidden Histories of Song of the South

Jason Sperb

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Jason Sperb : Disney's Most Notorious Film: Race, Convergence, and the Hidden Histories of Song of the South before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Disney's Most Notorious Film: Race, Convergence, and the Hidden Histories of Song of the South:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. this is one of the best, on a subjectBy PubliusAs academic books

about Disney go, this is one of the best, on a subject, "The Song of the South," that to the great shame of the Disney company remains locked up in its vaults. The film needs to be digitally remastered, rereleased in theaters, and put out on DVD immediately ... if only to showcase some of the studio's greatest animation, the Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, and Brer Bear characters and their antic interaction, and also the star turn of James Baskett, who got an honorary Academy Award for his performance as Uncle Remus the first Oscar ever given to a black man. The studio's first major post-war feature film, "Song of the South," prefigured and, in key ways, made possible the last great motion picture released by the company during Walt's lifetime, "Mary Poppins." "Poppins" was the crowning achievement in Disney's forty-year-long career. And timely, too. He died just eighteen months after it received five Oscars in April 1965. But "Poppins" might not have been as great as it was, and might not have happened at all if Walt and his men had not first overcome the technical challenges they faced in producing "Song of the South." Both movies, of course, combined live and cartoon action. Ub Iwerks, co-creator of Mickey Mouse, supplied much of the technical wizardry that made the two projects click, his innovations on the one, setting the stage for the other. More importantly, in song, words, and deeds, Baskett as Uncle Remus was a true role model for the characters later played by Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke; for, just as Poppins the nanny and Bert the chimney sweep would help guide young Jane and Michael Banks through a stormy patch in their family life, Uncle Remus helped little Johnny Favers weather a difficult family crisis in his life. 10 of 17 people found the following review helpful. A difficult slog - could have been much more reader friendly. By Peter Elliott I was blown away when I got this book as a Christmas present and excited to read about the history of this film...but then I started reading and to put it mildly, it's so densely written that it's almost impossible to read. It reads like someone's dissertation. I'm an intelligent guy, but when I re-read paragraphs several times to get the meaning of what the author is trying to say, I have to give up. So I skipped around. This is not the book I was hoping to read. 4 of 8 people found the following review helpful. a difficult read but worth it By A. Gass Very textbook like and wordy but.....I have to say a very well balanced look at the complete history of this controversial movie. Some will like, some won't. Keep an open mind, read between the lines and LEARN much.

The Walt Disney Company offers a vast universe of movies, television shows, theme parks, and merchandise, all carefully crafted to present an image of wholesome family entertainment. Yet Disney also produced one of the most infamous Hollywood films, *Song of the South*. Using cartoon characters and live actors to retell the stories of Joel Chandler Harris, *SotS* portrays a kindly black Uncle Remus who tells tales of Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, and the "Tar Baby" to adoring white children. Audiences and critics alike found its depiction of African Americans condescending and outdated when the film opened in 1946, but it grew in popularity and controversy with subsequent releases. Although Disney has withheld the film from American audiences since the late 1980s, *SotS* has an enthusiastic fan following, and pieces of the film such as the Oscar-winning "Zip-a-Dee-Do-Do-Dah" remain throughout Disney's media universe. *Disney's Most Notorious Film* examines the racial and convergence histories of *Song of the South* to offer new insights into how audiences and Disney have negotiated the film's controversies over the last seven decades. Jason Sperb skillfully traces the film's reception history, showing how audience perceptions of *SotS* have reflected debates over race in the larger society. He also explores why and how Disney, while embargoing the film as a whole, has repurposed and repackaged elements of *SotS* so extensively that they linger throughout American culture, serving as everything from cultural metaphors to consumer products.

"*Disney's Most Notorious Film: Race, Convergence and the Hidden Histories of Song of the South* (University of Texas, 2012) does more than dissect a film and the pros and cons around it. In its own way, it reveals that *Song of the South*, more or less by accident, holds a mirror to American views on race, with beauty or the lack thereof completely in the eyes of the beholder." (PopMatters 2013-07-16) "This study is meticulously researched and current on contemporary research, and though it reads slowly the payoff is worth the work. Summing Up: Highly recommended." (Choice 2013-08-01) "This excellent study of the controversy surrounding Disney's *Song of the South* is an insightful and thought-provoking analysis of one of the studio's most controversial films. Jason Sperb has produced an important analysis of one of popular culture's most hotly debated products." (The Historian) "Jason Sperb's *Disney's Most Notorious Film* quickly overcomes any concern that there might be nothing new to say about *Song of the South* by demonstrating how surprisingly persistent the film has been." (The Journal of American History) "While Sperb's conclusions of conscious racism are debatable, his meticulous documentation of *Song of the South* merchandising through sixty years and its other cultural references make *Disney's Most Notorious Film* an essential reference tool to those interested in *SotS*-iana." (Animation World Network) "This book is extremely smart, painstakingly researched, and it ties together many concepts and issues that too rarely find themselves in the same book. Sperb is a gifted writer, who holds his readers' attention with skill, and he provides a fantastic piece of work here, one that will serve multiple publics and that fills in important historical territory while also advancing discussions on race, convergence, Disney, film reception, textuality, and remediation. This is really quite a spectacular achievement." (Jonathan Gray, Professor of Media and Cultural Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and author of *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*) "*Disney's Most Notorious Film* is a tremendously interesting, timely, provocative,

and useful project. It is unique in studying reception and fandom through focus on a single, though also importantly dispersed and plural, text of nearly seventy years duration and circulation. On its own, *Song of the South* is a film demanding more analysis than it has received, and Sperb has given it the attention it deserves precisely by focusing on what's most intriguing about it: Its controversial aspects, its unique place in the Disney canon and marketing work, its fans, and the ways its pleasure and affect connect with changing American ideas about race. Perhaps the most important finding of this book is that fan activity which in contemporary scholarship is most often celebrated for creating new knowledge and engaged producer-consumers is very complex as it unfolds over time, and that it can have undesirable outcomes." (Arthur Knight, Associate Professor of American Studies and English, The College of William and Mary, author of *Disintegrating the Musical: African American Performance and American Musical Film* and coeditor of *Soundtrack Available: Film and Pop Music*) "This book is extremely smart, painstakingly researched, and it ties together many concepts and issues that too rarely find themselves in the same book. Sperb is a gifted writer, who holds his readers attention with skill, and he provides a fantastic piece of work here, one that will serve multiple publics and that fills in important historical territory while also advancing discussions on race, convergence, Disney, film reception, textuality, and remediation. This is really quite a spectacular achievement." (Jonathan Gray, Professor of Media and Cultural Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and author of *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*) "Disney's Most Notorious Film is a tremendously interesting, timely, provocative, and useful project. It is unique in studying reception and fandom through focus on a single, though also importantly dispersed and plural, text of nearly seventy years duration and circulation. On its own, *Song of the South* is a film demanding more analysis than it has received, and Sperb has given it the attention it deserves precisely by focusing on what's most intriguing about it: Its controversial aspects, its unique place in the Disney canon and marketing work, its fans, and the ways its pleasure and affect connect with changing American ideas about race. Perhaps the most important finding of this book is that fan activity which in contemporary scholarship is most often celebrated for creating new knowledge and engaged producer-consumers is very complex as it unfolds over time, and that it can have undesirable outcomes." (Arthur Knight, Associate Professor of American Studies and English, The College of William and Mary, author of *Disintegrating the Musical: African American Performance and American Musical Film* and coeditor of *Soundtrack Available: Film and Pop Music*) About the Author Jason Sperb is a lecturer in the Department of Radio/Television/Film at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.